

branches of the tree will break under them. Birds are seldom used to represent the Christian, or anything else that is good; as a family they are beasts of prey, and no doubt the Savior referred to them with this thought in his mind in the parable under consideration. He was more careful in the selection of his illustrations than many deluded theologians are in interpreting them.

The parable of the leaven is a twin sister to that of the mustard seed. In popular theology the parable of the leaven is made to teach that as the leaven absorbed or permeated the whole of the three measures of meal, so the gospel of Christ will permeate all of the human family in the course of time, and thus bring about the millennium of God foretold in the Bible. This is a very beautiful theory, and one could wish it was true, or would finally come true, but unfortunately for this very unfortunate theory, it is entirely unscientific and out of harmony with the teaching of other parables in particular and of the whole gospel of Christ in general. As every good housewife knows leaven is a sour, fermented substance. This is used in the Bible as a type or symbol of sin. It was never allowed to be used in any offering or ceremony symbolical of atonement or salvation. Many references could be given to substantiate this fact. Let a few suffice. Lev. 2:11 reads thus: "No meat offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven; for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire." In Exodus 23:17, 18 we have these words: "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread."

The Jews were prohibited from the use of leavened bread for seven days before the passover night in Egypt, and devout Jews observe that prohibition today yet during the passover week. The passover is the direct, specific type or symbol of salvation thru the blood of Christ. Surely Jesus would not use leaven as a figure, or a symbol, or a force in the work of salvation after all its prohibitions under the law. He was teaching Jews who were acquainted with what the law taught and they must have understood the parable because they asked no questions about it as they did about some of the other parables.

The New Testament confirms the teaching of the Old on this point. Jesus uses leaven as a symbol of hypocrisy. He says, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matt. 16:6.

Paul uses it as a type of sin in I Cor. 5:6, 8 as follows: Your glorifying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness,

but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Truth does not get sour; it does not ferment. Moreover truth does not permeate, that is, it does not pass thru and thru the individual, or society, and wholly absorb and possess it. After truth has done its highest and best work in either the individual or society there is still left the root of evil. Sin, like leaven in the meal, possesses every atom of our being. Not so with truth. Thru the work of the Holy Spirit the seed of truth is sown into some human hearts, thru yielding fully to the will of God a very high state of spirituality may be attained to, but after all the only truth-permeated being was the Lord Jesus, who is our substitute for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

When Jesus said that "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened," he must have had in mind the general apostasy of the church thru the leaven of sin and unbelief that was hid away in her from the very beginning. There was a hypocrite and traitor among the apostles before the church was even instituted, and from that day to this the same condition has obtained, and according to the teaching of this parable and many other predictions given in the Word, sin and unbelief shall completely permeate the church or Christendom in its closing days of this dispensation.

The thirteenth chapter of Matthew contains seven parables bearing upon the kingdom of heaven on earth, or the gospel of Christ in the world.

The first is that of the sower and the seed: the seed was all right and the sower was all right, but only a little of the seed fell on good ground so that it brought forth fruit. In other words not nearly all received the truth. There surely is no indication in this parable that all the world will be saved during the dispensation of grace.

The second parable is that of the wheat and tares. The Master expounds that himself in the following language: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be at the end of this world (age). The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. 13:37-44. This parable again shows that not all the world will be permeated with the spirit of truth and righteousness. The third and fourth are the parables of the

mustard seed and the leaven which I have under consideration.

The fifth is that of a treasure hid in a field which, when a man has found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field. The real truth as it is in Jesus, hath not permeated society but is represented as a hidden treasure and it is only here and there a man that finds it, when he does find it he gives all that he hath, his life and substance for it. This is very much unlike the popular Christianity of this, or any other day.

The sixth is that of the merchant and the pearls, who, when he finds one pearl of great price, sells all that he has, that he may obtain it. Again it is one man that is represented in the parable and not the masses.

The seventh is that of the net cast into the sea, which gathered of every kind, not only the good. When it was full they drew it ashore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels but cast the bad away. Jesus says, So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Three of the parables teach definitely that there will be unfaithfulness, unbelief and positive wickedness in the kingdom of heaven (so-called) unto the end of the world; to teach that only individuals and not the masses will accept the whole truth, notwithstanding these facts commentators and theologians undertake to interpret the parables of the mustard seed and of the leaven as indicative of the expansion and permeation of the righteousness of God thru-out the world. "Consistency thou art a jewel." Would Jesus utter these two little parables to controvert what he taught in the other five.

It is not difficult to discover the working of the leaven of sin and unbelief, and of hypocrisy thru-out the whole age of the kingdom of heaven on earth; that is the church period or the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. As already noted in considering the parable of the mustard seed, unbelief, division, insubordination, and hypocrisy were in the church from the very beginning, and have ever worked as a leaven to permeate her very being, and as we are drawing toward the close of the dispensation it becomes more and more manifest. Look at the millions of so-called Christians that are not church members at all, simply called Christians because they are not professed idolaters. Look at the millions that are mere nominal church members never regenerated by the Spirit of God, working as the leaven of sin in the churches, corrupting and destroying the purity and faith of God's true children, if possible.

Look at Christian Science (so called) permeating the very warp and woof of the church. Look at Spiritualism, no doubt true, but satanic. And last, but not least, look at the ferment or leaven that was generated at the Parliament of Religions at the